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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

(Chicago, IL) – Today, Congressman Luis V. Gutierrez (D-IL) joined Rep. Mike Quigley (D-IL) and Rep. Jared Polis (D-CO) to announce their unwavering support for allowing legal family-based immigration for same-sex couples as part of any comprehensive immigration reform plan that moves forward in Congress. They were joined at a noon press conference in Chicago by leaders of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgendered (LGBT) community in Chicago, supporters of immigration reform, and same-sex binational couples who would benefit from a law known as the Uniting American Families Act (UAFB / H.R.1024).

Congressman Gutierrez is considered the leader in the U.S. Congress of efforts to pass comprehensive immigration that reunites families and restores fairness and the rule of law to the system and is author of the Comprehensive Immigration Reform for America's Security and Prosperity Act of 2009 (CIR ASAP / H.R. 4321). "The Uniting American Families Act is important and I will fight for UAFB and its inclusion in any comprehensive immigration reform bill that passes this Congress," he said.

Also speaking at the event were Bernard Cherkasov, CEO of Equality Illinois, the state's largest LGBT rights organization, and same-sex binational couples and families who would benefit from comprehensive immigration reform that includes the provisions of the UAFB bill.

Under current federal law, same-sex couples and families are not recognized for the purposes of applying for immigration visas or applying to adjust one's legal immigration status. Under the immigration reform proposal Rep. Gutierrez authored, LGBT individuals in the country illegally would be eligible to apply for legal status and eventual citizenship if they meet certain criteria, pay fines and submit to criminal background checks -- just like any other individuals. But, the addition of the UAFA provisions would treat same-sex couples equally when it comes to applying for legal immigration benefits through the family immigration system.

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